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Letter dated 20 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey on agreed steps to revitalize the political process to end the Syrian conflict, in Russian and English, adopted in Moscow on 20 December 2016 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 31, "Prevention of armed conflict", and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 20 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and Russian]

Joint statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey on agreed steps to revitalize the political process to end the Syrian conflict

Moscow, 20 December 2016

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey, meeting in Moscow on 20 December 2016, agreed on the following.

1. Iran, Russia and Turkey reiterate their full respect for sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, non-sectarian, democratic and secular State.

2. Iran, Russia and Turkey are convinced that there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict. They recognize the essential role of the United Nations in the efforts to resolve this crisis in accordance with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015). The Ministers also take note of the decisions of the International Syria Support Group. They urge all members of the international community to cooperate in good faith in order to remove the obstacles in the way of the implementation of the agreements contained in these documents.

3. Iran, Russia and Turkey welcome joint efforts in eastern Aleppo, allowing for the voluntary evacuation of civilians and the organized departure of armed opposition. The Ministers also welcome partial evacuation of civilians from Fu'ah, Kafraya, Zabadani and Madaya. They are committed to ensuring the completion of the process without interruption and in a safe and secure manner. The Ministers express their gratitude to the representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Health Organization for their assistance in the conduct of the evacuation.

4. The Ministers agree on the importance of expanding the ceasefire, unhindered humanitarian assistance and free movement of civilians throughout the country.

5. Iran, Russia and Turkey express their readiness to facilitate and become the guarantors of the prospective agreement being negotiated between the Syrian Government and the opposition. They invite all other countries with influence on the situation on the ground to do the same.

6. They strongly believe that this agreement will be instrumental in creating the necessary momentum for the resumption of the political process in Syria in accordance with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015).

7. The Ministers take note of the kind offer of the President of Kazakhstan to host relevant meetings in Astana.

8. Iran, Russia and Turkey reiterate tneir determination to fight jointly against ISIL/Daesh and Al-Nusra and to separate armed opposition groups from them.